

J. Long

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A
LETTER
TO THE
FREEHOLDERS
OF THE
County of NORFOLK.

[Price Six-pence.]

LETTER

LETTER

TO THE

FREEMASONS



COUNTY OF NORFOLK

[Price Sixpence]

A
LETTER
TO THE
FREEHOLDERS

OF THE
County of NORFOLK;
—K

Occasioned by a PAMPHLET entitled,

“ The N—F—K Farmers Sentiments
“ upon the Report of a Bill being
“ to be brought into P—m—t, for
“ doubling the Qualification of Sports-
“ men.

WITH.

“ A Hint upon Compromises, and some
“ Methods proposed for the Defence of
“ Sportsmen, and securing the Rights
“ of FREEHOLDERS.”

By a FREEHOLDER of Norfolk.
The Hon: Ch: T-----d.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. VINCENT, near Chancery-Lane in
Fleet-Street. MDCCLIV.

LETTER

TO THE

FREEHOLDERS

OF THE

County of Norfolk;

Occasioned by a PARLIAMENTARY BILL.

"The Norfolk Farmers' Sentiments
 "upon the Report of a Bill being
 "to be passed in Parliament for
 "doubbling the number of sports
 "men."



"A First upon Committees, and some
 "Methods proposed for the betterance of
 "Sportmen, and securing the Rights
 "of Freeholders."

By a FREEHOLDER of Norfolk.

L O N D O N.

Printed for T. Vincent near St. Dunstons Church in
 Fleet Street. MDCCLXXII.

A

LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

AS great Pains have been taken, and various Arts are at this Hour employed by a Set of Men, to prejudice and mislead the Minds of the Gentlemen and Freeholders of this County; and more particularly as a Pamphlet has very lately been published, plainly with an Intention to create Discontent, as the only Means of raising Disturbance at the ensuing Election; I hope it will not be thought impertinent or improper in me, who have some Interest in the Matter, if I should offer to you, my Fellow-Countrymen, those Sentiments which have occurred to me on this Subject, from a very diligent and impartial Enquiry. As I am myself one of the

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Body of the Freeholders of this County, not comparatively considerable, though strictly independent in my Situation, I am so sensible how much it becomes me to think and to reason with Deference to others upon all Matters which come not within my daily Experience and Knowledge, that nothing should have persuaded or provoked me to undertake the Part I have done, but the sincere Attachment I bear to the Interest of the County I live in ; the Fears I seriously entertain of seeing that Interest misunderstood, from being misrepresented ; the Desire I have of guarding all Men in my own Situation against Imposition, and the Hopes I have conceived of contributing in my lesser Department, to the Preservation of that Peace and Quiet in the County which was lately so wisely, and we then hoped effectually established at a County Meeting. It is true, neither my Rank in Life, or my Degree of Property in the County, give me any Pretence to dictate to other Men or direct them, but the Freedom of that Form of Government, under which, thank God ! I was born, gives me a clear Right to speak my Opinion, without Restraint or Reserve ;

Reserve; and I trust, that the Farmers and Freeholders of the County of my own Situation and Condition in Life, will neither attend to me nor believe me the less for my having been brought up and lived in the same Manner as they themselves have; free from the Insincerity sometimes contracted in better Educations, and neither inclined by Nature, or called upon by any private Interest or personal Resentment to impose upon them or any Man whatever.

Having said thus much, to inform you with what View, and from what Principle I address myself to you upon this Occasion that you might be the better able to judge what Credit is due to me; I will now proceed to inform you by what Methods and Artifices some Gentlemen, naturally Enemies to Peace and Quiet, have laboured to render vain and fruitless all the Provisions so wisely made, and with such Unanimity at the late Meeting, for the Peace of the County, and to involve us once again in the Idleness, Riot, and Confusion of a contested Election. As soon as a Disposition appeared among the sober and discreet

Gentlemen of the County, whose Rank and Weight, gave them a Right to advise on such a Subject, to have the County summoned to a Meeting, in order to resolve on proper Persons to recommend to the Freeholders for their Representatives in the next Parliament, a particular Set of Gentlemen were observed to object in their Discourse to this Proceeding as Premature, but however, their Number being small, their Objections not being very weighty and the Meeting desired being the only Place in which such Objections could be properly considered, the County-Meeting took Place : Where, as you remember, the then Knights of the Shire were unanimously nominated as Candidates at the next Election. As soon as this Measure became public, the same Set of Gentlemen who had before objected to the Meeting every where, but at the Meeting itself, began to express a Dislike of the Nomination ; and now, finding it has not been in their Power to defer the County-Meeting, or prevent an early Nomination, they are trying the only Stratagem left and the last Step in their System, which is to disturb the Election itself, by representing the Conduct

duct of the County-meeting to the Freeholders in a Light it never deserved, by inflaming the Minds of the People with Representations of Injuries they have never received, and calling upon us to vindicate our Rights from Encroachments which have never been made. From this general View of their Conduct you will observe in this Place a strange and not a very amiable natural Willingness in these Gentlemen to differ from all other People; a Desire of being discontented, an Inability to maintain an Opinion they think right, and an Incapacity to give up a wrong Opinion once received, which Remark I desire you will carry on with you as you follow me through the State I will next give you of the Reasons they alledge in support of the Part they are acting.

The first Objection I ever heard made to any of the Steps preparatory to the approaching Election was, to the County-meeting itself, which I remember to have heard called by a Gentleman in my Part of the County to be unconstitutional, and as I thought the Objection of such a Nature, and so founded, that it
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must be either the most weighty, or the most frivolous that ever was made ; I took Pains to get some Information of the Truth. I learn't from the Gentleman himself who made the Objection, that by the Word Unconstitutional he meant contrary to the Form of Government established, and the Laws of the Land, but I could not prevail upon him to name what Part of the Constitution he refered to, nor could I persuade him, after a thousand Entreaties, to turn to the Laws themselves upon which he founded his Opinion. I confess, this Conduct in him, (whether it arose from a Disinclination, or an Inability to give me Information, I know not) made me not only distrust the Knowledge, but the Disposition of my Neighbour, and rather increased my Desire of making a farther Enquiry ; by which I have been convinced that the Word Constitution has been artfully introduced into this Question, as a Word of Alarm, to serve particular Purposes, and that it is not in any Degree, nor upon any Law contrary to the Constitution of this Country, or inconsistent with it, that the Gentlemen of any County should assemble

ble on a Summons from the Sheriff, before the Expiration of Parliament, to resolve among themselves upon proper Candidates at an approaching Election. It is a Part, and an essential Part, of the Constitution of this Country, that Elections should be free ; for this Reason Laws have been enacted to regulate the Writs, Process of Election, Rights of Election, Duty of Sheriffs, and every other material Point : But no Law has ever been past forbidding the County to meet as a County, when, and where it shall be thought most convenient to agree upon Persons proper to represent them. Nor is it necessary to the Freedom of Elections, that any such Meetings should be forbidden ; for, the Law having directed a certain Time to be left between the Declaration of the Receipt of the Writ and the Declaration of the Day of Election by the Sheriff, and again between the Declaration of the Day and the Day of Election itself ; no Man, desirous of being a Candidate, can be precluded by any previous County-meeting, which may tend to take the Sense of the County soberly and dispassionately, and prevent Confusion, but
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Can never be seriously thought, or artfully made, to break in upon the Freedom of Election as provided for by the Constitution and Laws of *England*. I am the more confirmed in this Opinion, by observing how universally this Practice of early County-Meetings has prevailed, never objected to in any other County but this; and by having been told, that some of the very Gentlemen who have since affected so warm a Regard for what they call the Constitution of this Country, were present at the County-Meeting, and there never expressed any Part of that infinite Concern they have since professed to feel, nor urged any of those national Considerations they have since so generally spread abroad in order to prevent the Evil they now complain of. How are we to reconcile such a Silence in that Place, where, and where only the supposed Evil could have been hindered, with the Clamour which has since been raised in every Place, when Redress was impossible, if necessary? An honest Man acting upon Principle, and from a tender Regard to his County, would have made his Opposition at the Meeting, and
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been silent afterwards, because the View of such a Man must always be to prevent Evil, and promote Peace; but a factious Man thinking, as these Gentlemen acknowledge they did, would have acted as these Gentlemen have done, and have acquiesced at first, in what they thought a wrong Measure, as the best Means of afterwards disturbing the Peace in Consequence of it. If that Meeting was really unconstitutional, or against Law, how glorious an Opportunity would it have been for a Gentleman bred up to the Law, well informed of his Subject, and a Man of Estate among us, to have openly maintained his Opinion at so numerous a Meeting? How easy would it have been for him to have turned to the Laws upon which he argued, and bore down Prejudice and vulgar Error by the Force of Evidence and Truth? And how much more noble and manly a Part had any Gentleman acted, who had thus brought the Point to a fair and open Debate before the Nomination, than those Gentlemen have done, who were silent at the only proper Time of making their Objection and have since been so active in every by-place and Corner of the

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County, in their Endeavours to alarm and poison the Minds of the Freeholders? In one Method of Conduct there would have been Dignity, good Sense, and Conscience, but the other carries with it the strongest Marks of private Prejudice and Insincerity. And give me Leave to take this Opportunity of observing to you in general, that in all Cases, where the Matter in Dispute may be difficult to determine in itself, and you have Occasion to judge of Measures from the Characters or Views of the Men engaged in them, you cannot follow a safer Rule, than first to suppose to yourself how an honest Man would act in the same Circumstances, and if the Conduct pursued by the Persons in Question be different from what a Man of ingenuous liberal Character would have followed, you cannot have a fuller Proof that the Designs of such Men are not to be adopted, and that their Representations are to be justly suspected.

As soon as the first Objection, which I have been answering, had lived its Day, and the Fallacy of the Argument had been exploded by cool and candid Men, whom the Manner of spreading
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it had awakened, a new Doctrine was invented to succeed to the former, and take the Place of it; which was, that the Nomination made at the County-Meeting had broke in upon the Rights of the Freeholders by previously deciding whom they should chuse; and this malicious Insinuation, the Contrivance of Men ingenious only in their Malice, was most diligently circulated, wherever there were any Hopes of turning the Passions of the People against their Reason and their Interest. But here again, as in the former Argument, I ask how, or in what Instance, our Rights as Freeholders are infringed by the Resolution of the County-meeting, or their Recommendation to us? In what do our Rights consist? Certainly in being able to vote for whom we please: Does the Recommendation of particular Persons by the Gentlemen assembled at *Norwich* preclude us in the Exercise of this Right? Certainly not: By one Act of Parliament, any two Freeholders have a Right to demand a Poll for any particular Person; is that Act of Parliament set aside, or superseded by the County-Meeting? Certainly not: By another Statute any Candidate

has a Right to demand a Scrutiny : By a Third, any two Electors may call for the Qualification of any Candidate. And are any of these Regulations annulled by the Nomination of Candidates at the County-Meeting ? It will not, it cannot, be said they are ; and therefore I beg leave to ask how it is possible to prove that our Rights as Freeholders, which are after a County-meeting as they legally were before it, have been in any Instance or Degree lessened or infringed by the late County-meeting at *Norwich* ? The Truth of the whole Matter is, this, several Families, whose Names deservedly are, and I hope, ever will be dear to this County consulted about the best Method of avoiding Confusion, and preserving Peace at the next Election ; they were all of Opinion, that the most equitable, as well as the most proper Way of pleasing the County was to take the Sense and Directions of the whole County itself ; accordingly, a General Meeting was held, and in that it was unanimously resolved, in the fullest Assembly ever known, to recommend the Gentlemen, then Knights of the Shire, to the Freeholders as the most proper Persons

Persons to represent them again, and thus the Nomination of Candidates was made in the most impartial Manner, according to the Sense of the County, without the least Intention to preclude us, the Freeholders, from our Right to contradict such Nomination, with no other View than to express to us the Opinion and Judgment of the Gentlemen of great Property in the County, and singly from a Desire of bringing the Matter before us in a proper manner for our Confirmation, if we approved of the Candidates named. For my own Part I am of Opinion that those who advised the County-meeting were wise and honest Men; those who put Mr. *Townshend* and Mr. *Woodhouse* in Nomination were grateful Men and Friends to Peace, and I cannot discover, as jealous a Freeholder as I am, in what Instance any Right I ever had from the Constitution or Laws of my Country has been suspended or taken from me. If I had an Inclination to demand a Poll at the Election for Mr. *M——m* or Mr. *F——s*, no Decision at the County-meeting could hinder me, if that be true, and I suppose Mr. *M——m* and Mr. *F——s* will allow it is, does not this
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prove that my Rights, as founded on Law, are still as they were un infringed and unaltered? But before I leave this Head, permit me to ask you what you would think of the Sincerity, Integrity, Justice and public Spirit of those who are the Assertors of the Doctrine I have been confuting, if I should assure you, as I can do with the utmost Truth and the best Authority, that these very Gentlemen, now such declared Enemies to the Meeting, from a pure Principle of Regard to the Good of the County and our Rights, did, before the Meeting they complain of, accuse Mr. *Townshend* and Mr. *Woodhouse* of private Cabal upon this single Evidence, that they had not then summoned a Meeting of the County, then said to be the only candid and legal Way of taking the Sense of the County, though since represented by the very same Men as unconstitutional and an Encroachment on the Right of the Freeholders? What Name would you give to Men, who, in private Transactions, acted thus inconsistently? But such are the Difficulties in Argument, and such are the shameful Contradictions in Conduct, to which all Men are, and ought to

to be reduced, who, in a Matter of public Consequence prefer every little indirect Part which flatters their false Notion of their own Importance, to that secret Satisfaction which an honest Mind receives from its own Approbation. There are Men so framed by Nature, or mis-governed by a ridiculous Ambition, that they had rather be finally condemned as Leaders in an exploded Cause, provided they can have the Pleasure of hearing themselves talked [of publicly during the Dispute, than be silently esteemed among the Friends of a good Cause, in common with other People; of this Sort, Temper, Conduct and Principle are some Gentlemen of our County, whom I could name, but it is hoped that at all Times, and at this Season in particular, the County will be too wise to suffer itself to be disturbed by the Prejudices and Noise of such Men, who are always endeavouring to raise a little Importance to themselves by being the Instruments of general Disorder; who seem to be of so unfortunate a Make, that they cannot act with any body, nor can any body act with them, and who seem to have laid it down in their own Minds as a certain Truth,

Truth, that this County in particular is enslaved, unless every Election produces an Opposition, and that the Kingdom in general can never be in Safety but under the Government of that Party whom it least can trust.

It would be a strange Neglect in me, and a plain Proof of Ignorance and Insufficiency, if in writing upon this Subject, I should overlook the Pains which have been taken by some Persons among us in Discourse and in Print, first to establish an odious Sense to the Word Compromise, and afterwards to represent the present Prospect of Peace among us, so disagreeable and disappointing to some Gentlemen of a certain Description and Temper, as the immediate Effect of that Measure; these Gentlemen vainly hoping by this System of Imposition, to lead the Minds of the Freeholders, unused to Matters of intricate Reasoning, by an Abuse of Words to a Misunderstanding of Things. For this Purpose it is, they first lay it down, that the Meaning of the Word Compromise is an Agreement between the Gentlemen of the first Rank in the County, to exclude the lower Order

der of Freeholders from any Share in the Election. They next assert, that the Nomination made at our late County-Meeting, was a Compromise in this odious Sense of the Word, and then all the Freeholders of the County are upon this strange Definition, in the first Instance, and Misrepresentation in the Second, loudly and personally called upon "to assert their Rights, to chuse their own Representatives, and to refuse every Man that has had any Share in promoting a Compromise." Whatever may be the true Sense of the Word Compromise, it must be admitted on all Hands, that, taking it as the Term used to express the Nomination of a County-Meeting, the Measure itself is not any otherwise objected to than upon a Presumption, that such Nomination tends to exclude the absent Freeholders; and therefore, the most effectual Way of considering the Ground of this Complaint, is to give you a Summary of the Manner in which our late County-Meeting was summoned, and the Nomination of Candidates made there. As soon as the Time of the Dissolution of the last Par-

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liament began to be known with any Probability, every Gentleman of Rank and Property, concerned for the Interest and anxious for the Peace of the County, began to express his Desire, that some Method might be taken of summoning the County by public Notice, and receiving the general Sense of it with Respect to their future Representatives. And among this Number, as I am most credibly informed, there were none more clearly and warmly of this Opinion, than some of those very Gentlemen who are now labouring to raise Opposition, by Calumniating the very Measure they then recommended: As soon as it was perceived that such a Meeting was desired by every Body, a Summons, containing a reasonable Notice, was advertised by the Sheriff; in Consequence of that Summons, there was the most full Meeting that ever was known of Gentlemen of the greatest Property from all Parts of the County, at which Meeting, Mr. *Townshend* and Mr. *Woodhouse* were nominated by two Gentlemen remarkable for their Interest, Distinction, and Property, and their Nomination of these Gentlemen

Gentlemen as Candidates, for the Honour of representing it, not as Representatives of this County, in the next Parliament, were unanimously approved of by every Body present. In Consequence of that Nomination, Mr. *Townshend* and Mr. *Woodhouse* immediately applied themselves to the Freeholders of the County, setting forth the Honour they had received by their former Nomination, and desiring their Concurrence and Votes in Support of it, which general Application they had certainly not made, if they had presumptuously thought that the Proceedings of the Meeting had been binding on the Consent, or Conclusive on the Voice of the Freeholders. And now, having faithfully related to you the Manner in which this Transaction past, give me leave to ask you how those who object to the Nomination as a Compromise, can prove it to have actually been a Compromise in their own Sense of the Word? Was not the Summons preceding the Meeting general, and from the proper Officer? Was not there a reasonable Time given before the Meeting? Was it not the most numerous that ever was known

upon the like Occasion? consisting of Gentlemen of the first Rank, and Property in the County? and if these Circumstances are true, which no Man can deny, what is a fair and open Nomination of Candidates, if the Nomination of Mr. *Townshend* and Mr. *Woodhouse* was not one, where are any internal Marks of fallacious Agreement, that should bring the Nomination of those Gentlemen within the odious Application of the Term Compromise? and what Candidates, for any County, have been named in a more open, ingenuous, and unexceptionable Manner, than they have been? Is a previous Meeting a Proof of a Compromise? every County has had one. Does a Recommendation of Candidates, by particular Persons, imply a Compromise? every County has followed the same Method. If the Censurers of our County-Meeting found their Disapprobation upon any Facts, known only to themselves, why have we not heard of them before the Meeting, at it, or since? On the contrary, if they have no other Ground for blaming the Conduct of that Meeting, and for establishing their odious Application of the Word
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compromise, than that the Meeting was previous to the Dissolution of Parliament, and that the Nomination of Candidates was made at that Meeting, they must confess that they only object to a Measure followed every where else, and to a Method of acting, not only strictly legal but candid, moderate and public spirited. If therefore the Word Compromise, as used by some Gentlemen, has been invented to convey any Distrust or Imputation, it is not in any Degree applicable to the Proceeding of our late County Meeting: On the contrary, if nothing further is meant by it than to express the Recommendation of the Meeting previous to the Day of Election by the Freeholders, I can only say it is a very innocent Term, unluckily used instead of a better, to describe a Transaction which must from the Nature, Motive, and Tendency of it, carry with it the Approbation and Concurrence of every sober, thinking, and disinterested Gentleman in the County of *Norfolk*.

The Author of the Pamphlet lately published, called the *NORFOLK Farmers Sentiments*, seems to be of Opinion with me, that no sound Objection can be made to

to any of those Transactions in the Country which I have been defending, else in a Pamphlet, contrived and published to stir up an Opposition, he had hardly spent so much of his Time and his Labour upon that dull and exploded Topic, the present Association for the Preservation of the Game, where again he seems to be under a Necessity of founding his Objections to what has been the Conduct of that Association, not by a Recital of what they have done, but by telling us what he has heard they intend to do. For my own Part I have read through this Part of his Pamphlet without any Emotion or Relentment, not only as one who could never think the Preservation of Game in itself a Matter of the utmost Importance, or the Association a Confederacy likely to be at any Time formidable to the Liberties of this Country, but because I observe the Author himself admits that the Association only execute what the Laws already, in being, direct; and that he gives us no Sort of Evidence to prove, that even that formidable Bill, for the better Qualification of Sportsmen, which seems to be the chief Source of all his Uneasiness and Apprehension, has ever

ever been brought into the Legislature at all, but such is the Disingenuouſneſs of this Writer, that rather than not try every Method of creating Uneaſineſs, he charges the Aſſociation with being oppreſſive in Inſtances, wherein they act only according to Law; he imputes to them an Intention to increaſe the Severity of thoſe Laws by Methods they never dreamt of, and then calls upon the People of our County to oppoſe our preſent Candidates upon his falſe View of the Aſſociation and groundleſs Charge upon it, in the ſame Manner as in another Place he endeavours to deceive us by a Miſrepresentation of every Thing that has paſſed in the County from the Time of ſummoning the Meeting to this very Day. As to Mr. Townſhend, againſt whom this Charge perhaps may be more particularly and perſonally levelled, let me take this Opportunity of fairly appealing to you all whether there is any Man of his Age and Rank in the World who, upon every Occaſion or Occurrence in Life public or private, has ſhown himſelf to be a more ſtrict and invariable Friend to Liberty in the utmoſt Extent of the Word than he has done?

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Unfortunate indeed would it be for him, if the Antiquity of his Name and Family in this County, together with his own, I may say, Services, to us all in the last Parliament, are not sufficient to secure him against the Malice of any little anonymous Writer, whose Pamphlet is one incoherent Collection of all the groundless Reports, malicious Clamour, and ignorant Dissertation he could heap together, or by which he could hope to infuse as much Error into the Minds, and raise as much Discontent in the Breasts of the People, as would serve to raise just as much Opposition at the Hour of Election, as might serve to mortify those whose Success, perhaps his own Jealousy, or his own private Resentment, may make an Uneasiness to him. It is needless to go into an Examination, how far the Association is public spirited, as it tends to execute Laws before unobserved: It would be mis-spending Time to give any Answer to that ridiculous Assertion made in the Pamphlet, that the Laws for the Preservation of the Game were intended by the Legislature, only as Laws *In terrorem*. No Question I ever heard started in relation to the Preserva-

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tion of Game ever appeared to me of much Consequence, and I have ever been amazed to hear of the warm Contests which have been carried on between Neighbours on this seemingly indifferent Point, but I could not avoid saying as much as I have done to prevent you from being influenced at this Time in the Choice of your Representatives by such remote Considerations, instead of plain Evidence and a Course of Experience to which every one of you can refer in his own Mind, and which cannot deceive him.

Upon the whole ; I am myself one of the Freeholders of the County ; I value my Rights as such, as highly, and would defend them against real Encroachments as warmly as any Man ; I have carefully enquired into the Grounds of every Objection I have ever heard to the Characters or Nomination of Mr. *Townshend* and Mr. *Woodhouse*, and my firm Resolution is to support the Recommendation made us by a late County-meeting, because I believe the Candidates named to be Men of the most ancient Families among us, of great Worth and experienced Integrity,

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and because, I think, we can do no better for our own Honour, and for the Peace of the County, than to confirm, by our Voices at the Election, the Sense express'd at the County-meeting in favor of Mr. Townshend and Mr. Woodhouse, in Opposition to that Cabal of a few Men, of inferior Rank and Character, who, from Singularity of Temper, natural Dislike of Peace and Quiet, from Vanity, and from past Disappointments, are for gratifying their own unreasonable Views and Resentment at the Expence of the Tranquillity and good Agreement of the whole County in general. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient and

most humble Servant,

A FREEHOLDER of Norfolk.

Norwich, April 29,

1754.



WHEREAS an anonymous Pamphlet hath been lately, with great Industry and some Expence, dispers'd in this County, not so much to vindicate the Characters and Conduct of Mr. Townshend and Mr. Woodhouse, as to disparage those of some Gentlemen, and in particular, and for several Pages, that of One bred to the LAW, for the great Offence of endeavouring to assert what appear'd to them to be for the Honour and Interest of this County, and by false Misrepresentations to render their Sincerity, Integrity, Justice, or public Spirit suspected: This is to inform the personated COUNTRY FREEHOLDERS, but suppos'd HONOURABLE AUTHOR, that, whenever he pleases to Father the Barron, and put his Name to the Charge, which it is presum'd every Gentleman is oblig'd to do, who attacks another's Reputation, he shall receive as public a Defence of what the Lawyer's value much more than any Reputation in his Profession, his Sincerity, Integrity, and public Spirit.